

27 November 1995

The Honorable Newt Gingrich
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

We believe that the consolidation of imagery resources and management in a single agency within the Department of Defense (DOD) will improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of imagery intelligence and mapping support to both national and military customers. Accordingly, we have agreed to a concept to create a National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA) that would have responsibility for imagery and mapping similar to what the National Security Agency has for signals intelligence. The NIMA would have program and budget authorities as well as research, development, acquisition, exploitation, and production responsibilities for imagery and mapping. Moreover, the Director of NIMA would have responsibility for the review and approval of other imagery resources to assure compliance with standards and policy.

A number of factors point to the advantage of consolidating efforts that are now separate into a new agency. First, imagery intelligence and mapping products are of growing importance to an increasingly diverse customer base across the government. We need a single streamlined agency focused on exploitation and distribution of imagery-derived products to serve this growing customer base. Second, with responsibilities currently split among five agencies, at present we are poorly positioned to leverage the tremendous potential of enhanced collection systems, digital processing technology, and the prospective expansion in commercial imagery. Third, the revolution in information technology makes possible a symbiosis of imagery intelligence and mapping which can best be realized through more coherent management. In the long run, these challenges can most efficiently be met by consolidation of our imagery and mapping assets within a designated Combat Support Agency.

Since early summer, an interagency task force representing the Intelligence Community, the DOD, and civil agencies has examined the merits and details associated with merging disparate Defense and Intelligence elements as well as the myriad possible approaches toward consolidation of imagery and mapping functions. The objective has been to determine the approach that makes the

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best sense in view of the complicated management, technical, and resource factors that bear on imagery and mapping activities. On the basis of the work of the interagency task force, we have now agreed on an approach that will enable us to achieve the advances in performance necessary to support future requirements of national and defense customers.

Because several Congressional committees have an interest in this question as part of their responsibilities, before proceeding with a comprehensive implementation plan, we shall consult closely with the Congress on the specifics of this proposal. For example, we are fully aware that some will be concerned that centralizing imagery exploitation in DOD will inevitably result in a decline in attention devoted to non-DOD, national users. We believe the proposed NIMA, when implemented, can improve quality to all customers at lower costs, and we are committed to maintaining service to our national users. We look forward to explaining the proposed changes in more detail and addressing the many questions that will undoubtedly be raised.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your convenience to begin this consultation period. In a few days we also intend to appoint a senior officer to lead a transition and implementation team to make NIMA a reality, and this officer will assist us in our discussions with you and other Congressional leaders.

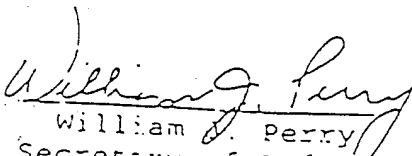
While there are many details to work out and many important questions to answer during our consultations with you, we are confident you will agree in the end that creation of a NIMA is essential to adequately posture our national and defense imagery community for the challenges that lie ahead.

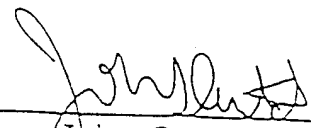
Identical letters are being sent to the Senate Majority Leader and to the appropriate Congressional Committees.

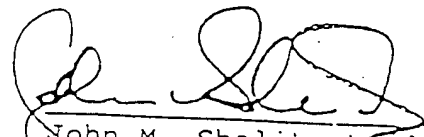
Sincerely,

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Sincerely,


William J. Perry
Secretary of Defense


John Deutch
Director of
Central Intelligence


John M. Shalikashvili
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Honorable Newt Gingrich

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